

# SUNY Oswego Community Services



The State University of New York at Oswego's Alternative Break Program  
Spring Break 2020: March 14th – 22nd



## Alternative Break Info Packet

Application Due: Feb 14, 2020

## About Oz Alt Break

Oz Alt Break is SUNY Oswego's Alternative Break program housed in the office of Community Services. Since 2001, SUNY Oswego students have dedicated their Winter and Spring breaks to engaging in strong direct service to local, domestic, and international communities. These week-long immersive service trips partner with community organizations to support efforts such as animal welfare, disaster relief, youth education, environmental concerns, quality affordable housing, health care, food security, and poverty alleviation.

Alternative Break participants do not “help” or “fix problems.” Instead of viewing our host site communities through a deficit framework, Oz Alt Break works from an asset based model. Our participants (referred to as Alt Breakers) serve alongside community members to strengthen the organization they are serving with. Our service focuses on creating justice, not doing charity. This framework allows Alt Breakers to learn from the knowledge and experience of our host sites while also working towards becoming active citizens who serve for the common good.

### Oz Break values:

- **Active Citizenship:** A continuum where the ultimate goal is for individuals to prioritize the community in their values and life choices.
- **Social Justice:** A process and a goal where there is full and equal participation for all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet everyone's needs and full potential.
- **Simple Living:** Limiting our negative impact on the environment and community by keeping within limits that reflect the socio-economic conditions of the communities we work in and lower our ecological footprint.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Commitment to individual and programmatic efforts to build mutual respect, dignity, access, and equity among all groups of people.
- **Self-Awareness and Reflection:** Creating time and space to analyze how we impact the community and ways in which we contribute to and can alleviate social problems.

## Trip Elements

### Direct Service

All Oz Alt Break trips engage in direct or “hands on” projects and activities that address unmet social needs as determined by the community. Depending on the trip's focus issue, this direct service could look like building or repairing a house, serving meals, working with youth, maintaining hiking trails, creating care packages, and much, much more. Sometimes the work is physically demanding, sometimes it is emotional. No matter what the site, your full participation will lead to you gaining new skills, building meaningful relationships, and working towards a more socially just world.

### Reflection and Education

Oz Alt Break recognizes that service is just one component of social justice and active citizenship. The combination of direct service, social issue education, and daily reflections during the trip result in the most successful and transformative Alternative Breaks. Before, during, and after trips, group leaders will facilitate discussions, reflections, and team builders to encourage a deeper understanding of service and community.

## **Full engagement**

Alt Breakers are expected to be fully engaged, body and mind, during the entire trip. One of the most important aspects of full engagement is our commitment to a *Drug and Alcohol Free* experience. Alternative Breaks are just what the name implies, an alternative to traditional college breaks. In fact, the Alternative Break movement began in the late 1980's as a counter cultural response to the "MTV culture" of spring breaks. A drug and alcohol free policy (no matter age or the laws) assures Alt Breakers will provide the best possible service to our host sites and get the most out of their trip experience. If a participant is found to be using, possessing, manufacturing, or distributing drugs or alcohol, they will be required to return home at their own expense. Participants found in violation will not be permitted to participate in Alternative Breaks for at least one academic year.

## **Accommodations**

### **Meals**

Included in trip costs are three meals a day and snacks. Alt Breakers plan, prepare, and eat meals together as a team. In an effort to adhere to our simple living and sustainability values, we budget \$7 per person per day for meals. This budget is almost three dollars a day more than the amount an individual receives through SNAP (Food Stamps) benefits. We accommodate dietary restrictions and allergies.

### **Housing**

Housing is included in trip costs. In the spirit of simple living, groups do not stay in hotels but instead partner with churches, colleges, hostels, and community centers. Air mattresses or barrack-style bunk beds are common. This means most of our housing sites require Alt Breakers to bring their own bedding, towels, and toiletries. Community Services has several sleeping bags available if participants do not have their own.

### **Transportation**

Transportation to and from sites is provided by the program; including flights for international trips. All domestic trips are traveled to by car. Students who are van trained through the college or who are 21 years of age and older with a valid driver's license are encouraged to sign up as drivers. For car trips especially, Alt Breakers are urged to save space by bringing only one small-medium duffel bag plus a sleeping bag.

## **Required Info Sessions & Pre-Trip Meetings**

### **Info Sessions**

All applicants **MUST** meet with the Coordinator of Community Services before they are able to be placed in a trip. These meetings explain the basics of Oz Alt Break, introduce each trip, and offer time for applicants to ask any questions. Email [Catherine.Farrell@oswego.edu](mailto:Catherine.Farrell@oswego.edu) to set up a meeting time.

## **Pre-Trip Meetings**

Once you have been selected and placed into a trip, your Group Leader will contact you about Pre-Trip Meetings. These meetings are an essential and required part of Alternative Break. You will get to know your fellow Alt Breakers, receive important details about your specific trip, and learn more about your host site organization, host site community, and the issues related to your trip topic.

## **Cost & Payments**

The cost of all trips includes transportation (including flights if international), housing, and meals. Payments can be made in cash or check made out to Auxiliary Services. **These payments should be dropped off to a Community Services staff member only.** Do not submit a payment to anyone other than the Coordinator of Community Services or the Community Services Graduate Assistant unless told otherwise. Be sure to obtain a receipt. This assures the safe acceptance of your payment.

**A nonrefundable \$25 deposit of is due with the application.** Applications will not be considered until the deposit is submitted. This \$25 will be put towards the trip fee once you have been assigned to a trip. If you are not assigned to a trip you will receive your deposit back.

## **Deposit Waiver**

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Students who are members of the SUNY Oswego Educational Opportunity Program are able to waive the initial \$25 application deposit. EOP members who wish to have the deposit fee waived should check the EOP waiver box when completing the application.

## American Hiking Society: Sustainability and State Park Maintenance

<b>Organization</b>	The <i>American Hiking Society</i> advocates for hiking spaces and improved trails across the United States so all can enjoy the great outdoors. They work with Congress, federal agencies and partners on policy issues and legislation to ensure permanent access to meaningful hiking opportunities.
<b>Service</b>	Repairing existing and building new hiking trails, along with other projects to prep the park for opening in the spring.
<b>Location</b>	Douthat State Park, VA
<b>Cost</b>	\$220

## Affordable Housing for All: Homeownership and Repairs in a Rural Area

<b>Organization</b>	<i>Shoals Habitat for Humanity</i> is dedicated to eliminating substandard housing locally and worldwide through constructing, rehabilitating and preserving homes; by advocating for fair and just housing policies; and by providing training and access to resources to help families improve their shelter conditions.
<b>Service</b>	Building or repairing homes in various stages of construction. Participants may also serve in the ReStore organizing donations. No previous construction experience is required as you will go through an extensive orientation of all projects and tools.
<b>Location</b>	Florence, Al
<b>Cost</b>	\$220

## Live Free Livestock: Animal Rescues and Sustainable Farming

<b>Organization</b>	<i>Liberty Hall Livestock Rescue</i> is a working farm that provides a second chance for abandoned farm animals. In addition to sustaining itself through organic farming, Liberty provides professional medical care, safe housing, quality food, and a peaceful existence to its rescue animals.
<b>Service</b>	Various daily farm chores including but not limited to mucking stalls, feeding animals, collecting and selling organic produce, and assisting with facilities maintenance. Everyday one on one time with animals encourages rehabilitation.
<b>Location</b>	Paris, VA
<b>Cost</b>	\$220

## Staycation: Exploring Oswego County's Challenges and Strengths

<b>Organization</b>	Oswego Health, Oswego County Opportunities, and ARISE.
<b>Service</b>	Participants will serve with a different organization each day. Service may include preparing and distributing meals, building wheel chair ramps, working with senior citizens to provide our community members access to various resources.
<b>Location</b>	Oswego County, NY
<b>Cost</b>	\$35

TRIP DESCRIPTIONS